



HOOPA VALLEY TRIBAL COUNCIL

Hoopa Valley Tribe

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Chairman Byron Nelson, Jr.

MEMORANDUM

To: All Tribal Departments
Hoopa Valley Community

From: Byron Nelson, Jr., Chairman 

Date: March 18, 2020

Re: Chairman's Update on COVID-19 Response

The Hoopa Valley Tribe is deeply committed to the health, safety, and welfare of the Tribe, its tribal members, and tribal community. On March 4, 2020, I, the Tribal Chairman, declared a State of Emergency due to the outbreak of COVID-19, which was ratified by the Tribal Council on March 5, 2020, by Resolution 20-08. Since then, the Tribe has been taking certain actions in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic.

As the Tribal Chairman and on behalf of the Tribe, I am hereby issuing the following updates to the Community and Tribal Employees to provide clear, timely, and proactive information to our tribal community and staff regarding the steps that the Tribe has taken in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic and what you, as the tribal community and staff, can do to help us to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Community Update

Community Guidance

Facts about COVID-19:

As we have had more extensive experience with COVID-19, it is clear that a significant majority of those infected have no or only mild symptoms.

- With additional testing, the number of cases of COVID-19 are growing.
- The vast majority of these cases are now the result of community spread.
- Public health team efforts have been focused on identifying persons with COVID-19, separating them from others, and tracking down persons who were exposed to the

infected person. This containment strategy helped to slow the introduction of the virus but must be redirected to address the larger number of cases in the surrounding regions.

- Public health staff have shifted their efforts to community mitigation measures to slow the spread of COVID-19 and protect those who are most vulnerable to severe illness.

As the Chairman, I have directed a daily meeting to occur regarding the Tribe's COVID-19 response and the tribal implementation of the Hoopa Valley Tribe's Pandemic Response Plan. The goal of pandemic planning is to allow the Hoopa Tribe to prepare to manage the COVID-19 pandemic on the Hoopa Reservation, to reduce the transmission of COVID-19, and to minimize hospitalizations and deaths. We also want to maintain essential tribal services and reduce the economic and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

California Governor Newsom declared a State of Emergency in California to help the state prepare for the broader spread of COVID-19. The California Department of Public Health has determined that all gatherings should be postponed or canceled across the state until at least the end of March, and that all gyms, health clubs, and theaters should be closed.

The Tribal Council and I would like to remind all individuals to exercise good judgment during this time, practice the recommended social distancing measures, and take precautions to reduce the potential risk of infection. This includes traveling from the Reservation to outside of the exterior boundaries of Humboldt County. I recognize that social and family gathering are essential to our cultural values; however, you should also limit visits to/from others that are not in your immediate household. Although community mitigation measures can be disruptive, these recommendations are to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of our tribal community and nearby communities.

Therefore, as Chairman, I am recommending that all gatherings as described below should be postponed or canceled across the Reservation, for at least the remainder of the Tribal State of Emergency:

- Gathering that include ten (10) people or more should be postponed or canceled.
- Smaller gatherings held in venues that do not allow social distancing of six feet per person should be postponed or canceled.
- Gatherings of individuals who are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 should be postponed or canceled.
- A "gathering" is any event or convening that brings together people in a single room or space at the same time.

This directive is necessary to protect the public health, safety and welfare of our tribal members and our tribal community and to slow the rate of transmission of COVID-19. Timely implementations of aggressive strategies (such as this one) that create social distance and that reduce close contact of people not regularly together, including limiting gatherings, have proven effective in prior pandemics at delaying rates of transmission and reducing illness and death. Generally, during pandemics, the most vulnerable populations are elders, youth, and those with

immune compromised systems, and for this reason, this directive is an essential measure that needs to be taken for the protection of the Tribe, Tribal members, and the Tribal community at large.

Delegation of Authority

Effective today and pursuant to the Hoopa Valley Tribe's Pandemic Response Plan, I have designated Amos Pole, Director of OES, as the Incident Commander for the COVID-19 Pandemic ("Incident"). The Incident Commander is responsible for initiating activation of the Incident Command System structure, maintain responsibility for the overall management of the Incident, monitor the situation, and maintain contact with health officials.

Tribally Approved Media Sources for Updates

Effective today, the following Media Sources will be utilized for official updates for the Incident:

- KIDE;
- Hoopa Valley Tribe's website, which can be accessed at <https://www.hoopa-nsn.gov>;
- The following Facebook pages: K'ima:w Medical Center, Hoopa Valley Tribe, and Hoopa Fire Department and Office of Emergency Services; and
- Information Boards located at: K'ima:w Medical Center, Neighborhood Facility, Hoopa Grocery Store, and Tribal Police department.

Department and Entity Closures

At this time, the following Tribal departments and entities have been closed:

- Lucky Bear Casino; and
- Early Childhood Facility (Early Head Start, Head Start, and Child Development).

The Tribe will notify the community if any further closures of tribal departments and entities are ordered.

Court Orders

At any point, tribal, county, state, or federal governments may issue a shelter in place order. All current court orders must be followed, and upon activation of a shelter in place order, the courts may issue emergency orders that are affected by a shelter in place order.

Employee Update

Annual, Compensatory and Sick Leave

Effective immediately, all annual, compensatory, and sick leave shall be frozen for those employees who are laid off during the declared Pandemic emergency.

Public Health Emergency Leave

Eligible employees will permit them to attend to the medical needs of self and immediate family members by providing up to eighty (80) hours of paid leave per calendar year when communicable disease/pandemic of Public Health Threat conditions are declared by the Hoopa Valley Tribal Council.

Travel Restrictions for Employees

Effective immediately, the following travel restrictions for employees are in place:

- 1) All work-related travel outside the exterior boundaries of Humboldt County is hereby suspended and limited, unless the Chairman makes a finding that such work-related travel is essential to the tribal government. In that instance, such travel must be justified, documented, and approved by the Chairman, or in his absence, the Vice-Chairman.
- 2) All work-related travel that is related to individuals traveling to the Reservation from outside of the exterior boundaries of Humboldt County is hereby suspended and limited, unless the Chairman makes a finding that such work-related travel is essential to the tribal government. In that instance, such travel must be justified, documented, and approved by the Chairman, or in his absence, the Vice-Chairman.
- 3) Essential work-related travel is defined as any situation where business, that is essential to the tribal government, cannot be reasonably conducted without face-to-face interaction or visits to specific locations. All non-essential work-related travel shall be denied.
- 4) For work-related travel within the exterior boundaries of Humboldt County, if such travel requires travel authorization, it must be justified, documented, and approved by the Chairman, or in his absence, the Vice-Chairman.
- 5) For all work-related travel that has already been approved, such travel must be re-approved by the Chairman, or in his absence, the Vice-Chairman.
- 6) For all work-related travel that is approved, automobiles shall be used as the mode of transportation, unless authorized by the Chairman, or in his absence, the Vice-Chairman.

- 7) Employees who become ill during or upon returning from any travel should contact a health care provider immediately, and as soon as possible, shall contact their supervisor, the Human Resources department, or the Incident Commander for direction.
- 8) Employees who return from any travel or who have travelled since March 4, 2020, who do not exhibit any abnormal symptoms must still contact their supervisor, the Human Resources department, or the Incident Commander for direction.
- 9) Employees who are on leave (vacation, sick, bereavement, etc.) and who travel to affected areas shall be advised that a "self-isolation" or "quarantine" period shall be placed upon them before they are allowed to return to work. This precaution shall remain in effect until the CDC determines there is no further threat from the pandemic.
- 10) Please note that employees who have traveled, even on personal business, may be directed to remain away from the workplace for fourteen days to determine whether or not they have been exposed. Should this occur, the individual should work with his or her supervisor, the Human Resources department, or the Commander to set appropriate telecommuting arrangements or request time off from work.

These travel restrictions for employees supersede all previous restriction and memorandums. These travel restrictions apply to all members of the Tribal government, its officers, agencies, authorities, committees, commissions, boards, affiliates, entities, employees, contractors, and agents. These restrictions shall remain in effect until terminated and/or modified by the Tribal Chairman and/or the Tribal Council.

Employees should note that failure to adhere to these restrictions may be considered insubordination and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

Department Requests for FEMA

All Tribal Departments are hereby ordered to send the Incident Commander a list of necessary supplies that are needed in order for that Department to continue operating for the next sixty (60) days.

Department Continuity of Operations Plans

All Tribal Departments were ordered to send their Continuity of Operations Plan ("Plan") to the Incident Commander by Monday, March 16, 2020. I am hereby ordering all Tribal Departments to submit their plan today, March 18, 2020, by 5pm. This is essential to developing the Tribe's Continuity of Operations Plan and ensuring that the Tribe's response to the Incident is effective. This will also ensure that tribal operations remain operational and that necessary and essential services to our community can continue during this time.

Managers Guidance

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (“CDC”) has issued Interim Guidance for Business and Employers. All tribal departments should adhere to the following recommended strategies:

- 1) Review the Hoopa Pandemic Plan and Pandemic Checklists.
- 2) Immediately institute a social distancing program, including limiting access to office workspaces.
- 3) Actively encourage sick employees to stay home.
- 4) Immediately separate sick employees. Employees who appear to have symptoms upon arrival to work or become sick during the day should be separated from other employees and sent home immediately.
- 5) Remind employees of proper cough and sneeze etiquette and hand hygiene.
- 6) Perform daily environmental cleaning. Employees should clean all frequently touched surfaces in the workplace, such as workstations, countertops, and doorknobs.